

Moving Forward with Momentum - 2021 for Burlington Economic Development

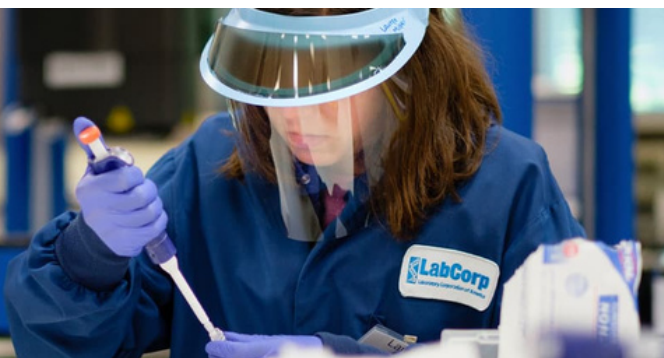
With 2022 off and running, we all like to look back and celebrate the accomplishments of the past year and highlight their impact throughout the community. Burlington Economic Development works everyday to have positive impact on the economic outlook of Burlington's residents, and we look forward to continuing to do so in 2022. Here are some of the highlights from a busy 2021:

Burlington keeps on growing

The US Census Bureau released the results of the 2020 Census, showing Burlington and Alamance County both greatly increased in population over the last 10 years. Burlington developed from about 49,700 residents to 57,000 since 2010, and Alamance County grew to 171,000 from 151,000. Burlington continues to be about a third of the Alamance's total population and our community at large is seeing the spill over effects from the Triangle's expedient growth in the last decade.

NC State Budget Allocations to Burlington

Through the North Carolina General Assembly's budgetary process, City staff submitted projects to our local representation as proposals to be funded in the 2021-2023 budget. These projects involved water and sewer improvements for Downtown Burlington and economic development sites near Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport. Four major City of Burlington projects were funded totaling \$15.8 million. We are thankful for the efforts of our community's dedicated public servants in the legislature: Senator Amy Gale, Representative Dennis Riddell, and Representative Ricky Hurtado. Burlington's delegation provided the City consistent communication and insights throughout the budget approval process. These investments will lay the groundwork for further development and private investment in the City.



BURLINGTON

US EDA invests in Burlington industrial growth

In March of 2021, the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced the award of \$288,603 to the City of Burlington for the construction of a sewer line extension. That extension will serve **Innovative Knitting's** new operation, moving into Burlington's growing industrial area south of Interstate 40/85. The company will invest \$2.5 million in the facility, retain 17 existing jobs and add 10 new jobs. A special thanks to City Engineer Todd Lambert and Stormwater Manager Amy Cameron for their assist to Economic Development staff on the lengthy application process for these funds, couldn't have done it without them!

Luxury homeware design and manufacturer NOA Living relocates to Burlington

In April of 2021, **NOA Living** announced the selection of Burlington to be the location of their headquarters and home goods manufacturing operations. The company will invest a total of \$3.7 million and create 24 jobs, while renovating the historic 1893 Lakeside Mill. This investment was assisted by an awarding of a \$200,000 Building Reuse Grant to the City of Burlington to match part of NOA Living's renovation cost. This project is an example of how leveraging state and local funds encourages the reinvigoration of historic properties, bringing new life to Burlington's legacy textile building stock.



New Jobs: 24

Investment: \$3.7 million

Burlington Economic Development helps small businesses recover from COVID-19

In the height of the pandemic, businesses of all types were reeling, seeing significant impacts to their bottom line due to closures, mandates and a cautious public. To provide direct aid to the most vulnerable and impacted, the Burlington Microenterprise Fund was created - financed by funding provided from the US Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), originating from the CARES ACT. A total of \$154,000 was allocated to 22 Burlington microenterprises since August of 2020, with funds exhausted in September of 2021. Economic Development staff were thrilled to partner with Burlington's Community Development Department and the Piedmont Triad Regional Council in this effort. It was humbling to work with so many dedicated small business owners still reeling from the impacts of the pandemic, and we are proud to have played a role in helping them through a difficult time.

Targeted grants established to brighten Maple Avenue Corridor

The Maple Avenue Façade Grant is a program targeted to fund exterior improvements at commercial properties along Maple Avenue. With a maximum award of \$10,000, the grant can be impactful to help match private funds in giving a facelift to many businesses along and near Maple Avenue. One grant has already been awarded and staff look forward to awarding several more in 2022. For more information on how your business can receive funding or support, [apply here](#).



Partnership with Elon University adds fellowship position

Our Department was also fortunate enough to add a new staff member thanks to partnership with Elon University. Chandler Vaughan is Burlington Economic Development's new Elon Year of Service Fellow. This partnership between the City and Elon University is intended to get recent Elon graduates working and experiencing our community through public service. Chandler has been an invaluable infusion of creativity, ideas, and hard work and has been an asset to us since June. She continues to work diligently on initiatives with our downtown Municipal Service District, small business, community initiatives, and our new Economic Development Newsletter, [found here!](#)

Despite pandemic pressures, Downtown Burlington is as strong as ever

Despite weathering the trials and tribulations of the COVID-19 pandemic, Burlington's Downtown has thrived in 2021. With the opening of the Mini Dingo bottleshop and Tanner's Wine Bar, our Downtown has continued to grow as an entertainment and dining destination for residents and visitors seeking to relax and have a good time. Two new murals were erected, one on S. Spring Street and another on Front Street near Walker Dance Studios. In November, the Burlington Food Hall opened on Front Street. An integrated assortment of Go Burrito, 4 smaller food shop kiosks, and a commissary kitchen, the Food Hall will be a center of food related entrepreneurship going into 2022!



Retail, food and multifamily dominate commercial activity

While analysts were predicting the precipitous death of bricks-and-mortar retail even before the pandemic, developers and national brands in Burlington didn't seem to get the memo. In 2021, Burlington welcomed two new grocery stores, Lidl and Publix, each anchored by significant new retail space for lease. Fitness giants O2 Fitness and Planet Fitness have each opened new facilities in the City. National food franchises like Chipotle, Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, Bojangles, Biscuitville and more revealed plans for new stores in Burlington. From a residential perspective, 2021 brought Burlington several hundred more units of garden-style apartment projects and one new historic mill renovation into residential.

We Had some Fun with the Sock Puppets!

If you live or work around Burlington and Alamance County, the Burlington Sock Puppets did not go unnoticed in the Summer of 2021. The folks over at Burlington Athletic Stadium put on a show for us in June and July, taking a hold of their first season and becoming a social media and attendance phenom. From sassy tweets and wildly popular merchandise, to a creative new mascot in Sock Squatch, the Sock Puppets entertained us on and off the field, having a resoundingly successful 2021 and bringing joy to all of our community.

Burlington Economic Development completes 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

Where is Burlington headed for 2021? We're glad you asked! One of the department's major projects involved creating the City's first economic development strategic plan. This plan is a 5-year strategy with specific actions designed to capture more job-creating investments by new and existing companies. The plan calls for updating the City's incentive guidelines, investing in infrastructure to create more 'shovel-ready' sites and working collaboratively with the City's economic development partners to provide more services to existing industries and entrepreneurs. The department looks forward to getting the plan adopted by City Council in early 2022 and getting to work!



Building on Momentum in the Triad

Local economies do not operate in a vacuum – projects in neighboring communities have influence on our outlook and can help shape Burlington's path moving forward. Alamance County and the Burlington metropolitan area celebrated several successes in 2021, including an expansion of Lotus Bakeries and the beginning of site work for two 2020 announcements – the Chic-Fil-A and UPS distribution centers. Nearby Orange County welcomed MedLine distribution and ThermoFisher Scientific. Economic Development teams from Guilford and Randolph Counties partnered with a variety of state and local agencies to win a new Toyota battery manufacturing plant at the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite, just 20 minutes from Burlington down NC 62. The region defining win representing billions in new investment and thousands of jobs will stand as a major influencer on Burlington's prospects moving forward. With the Triad's profile raised and our proximity, Burlington will be a prime industrial destination moving forward.

Finally, a word of thanks to all of our partners, companies and friends in the Burlington community. Economic development is the ultimate team sport where collaboration brings success. We look forward to working with you in 2022 and thank you to your contributions to a successful 2021!